

Chapter One

Regional Planning

Passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990 by the State Legislature was the first critical step in the development of rational policies to sustain growth in Washington. For the first time in the State's history, all urban counties and their cities were required to develop and adopt comprehensive plans and regulations to implement these plans. To ensure comparable planning efforts, the Growth Management Act requires that comprehensive plans address specific issues including, but not limited to: land use, transportation, housing, facilities and services, utilities, natural environment, and economic development.

To achieve coordinated planning efforts, the Growth Management Act further requires that counties and cities develop a set of framework policies to guide development of each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan. In order to implement the Growth Management Act, King County conducts planning on five different levels. These levels of planning encompass land areas ranging in size from small neighborhoods to multiple counties.

Five Levels of Planning for King County		
Level	Purpose	Examples
Multi-county	Most frequently, multi-county planning is conducted by the Puget Sound Regional Council and includes King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap Counties. This level of planning is needed to address issues that affect the entire Central Puget Sound region.	-Metropolitan Transportation Plan -Regional Benchmarks -Multi-County Economic Development Strategy -Multi-County Planning Policies
Countywide	This level of planning is conducted by King County in cooperation with the cities to address a wide range of issues that affect the entire County.	-Countywide Planning Policies -King County Comprehensive Plan -Action Plan for Affordable Housing
Subarea	This level of planning, previously called community plans and basin plans, brings the policy direction of the Comprehensive Plan to a smaller geographic scale.	-Community Action Strategy Capital Facility Plans -Duwamish Coalition Project -Fall City Subarea Plan
Functional	This level of planning is conducted by King County, special purpose districts or other agencies. Some plans cover the entire County, while others pertain to specific areas. Functional plans focus on the delivery of services or facilities.	-Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan -Regional Wastewater Services Plan -Six-Year Transit Development Plan
Neighborhood	These local plans address issues of concern to individual communities.	-White Center Action Plan -Vashon Town Plan -Aurora Corridor Study

The Growth Management Act also provides for re-evaluation of the comprehensive plan to address emerging land use and regulatory issues. The Act also calls for jurisdictions to evaluate progress towards the implementation of respective comprehensive plans and countywide planning policies.

I. Defining Regional Objectives

Prompted by citizens, King County adopted its first comprehensive plan to manage growth in 1964. Two decades later, the 1985 Comprehensive Plan identified an urban growth boundary line to limit urban growth to areas with the infrastructure needed for facilities and services. It also established policies to preserve rural areas, conserve the natural environment and designate resource lands for long-term agriculture and forest production.

King County played a key role in the development of *Vision 2020*, a long-range growth management, economic and transportation strategy for the central Puget Sound region. *Vision 2020*, developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), outlines a growth management and transportation strategy under state and federal laws. Member counties and cities of the PSRC adopted Vision 2020 in 1990.

The Growth Management Act (GMA), adopted by the state legislature in 1990, requires urban counties to develop comprehensive land use plans addressing growth. The GMA also requires counties and cities to work together to develop framework policies to guide the comprehensive plan development. These Countywide Planning Policies (CPP), first adopted in 1992, establish a vision for the future of King County - its cities, unincorporated urban areas, rural areas, and farms and forests. Under the CPP vision for the year 2012, King County will boast a diversified sound regional economy and high quality of life with a defined rural area, busy urban centers linked by a high capacity transit system and preservation of many natural areas.

King County's comprehensive plan builds on this vision for the unincorporated part of the county. The County's first comprehensive plan under the GMA was adopted in 1994. This 2000 update continues to be based on not only the mandates of the law, but also the goals voiced by citizens during the 1994 plan process and repeated during the plan update process.

The policies in this plan support the following objectives, which reflect the GMA goals, the CPP and public opinion:

- **Preserve the high quality of life** by balancing infrastructure needs with social, cultural, educational, recreational, civic, health and safety needs.
- **Spend money wisely and deliver services efficiently** by:
 - Concentrating infrastructure investments and service delivery to support the regional development pattern near cities where a full range of local services are located or can be made available;
 - Solving service deficiencies within the County to meet existing service needs and phasing service improvements for the needs of future growth;
 - Looking to King County to provide countywide facilities and services, and;
 - Relying primarily upon cities and special purpose districts as the providers of local facilities and services appropriate to serve those local needs, except where the County is the local service provider (e.g., Rural Area).
- **Continue our economic prosperity** by promoting a strong and diverse economy for King County residents through policies and programs that encourage new business opportunities, increase family wage jobs and create a predictable regulatory environment for businesses and citizens.
- **Increase the housing choices for all residents** by permitting a wide variety of home styles and by increasing housing opportunities for all residents in locations closer to jobs.
- **Ensure that necessary transportation facilities and services are available to serve development at the time of occupancy and use** by targeting road and transit investments where growth is desired and for equitable contributions to the transportation system by new development.
- **Balance urban uses and environmental protection** through careful site planning that maximizes developable land while respecting natural systems.

- ***Preserve rural, resource and ecologically fragile areas for future generations*** by maintaining low residential densities in the rural areas and in areas containing regionally and nationally important ecosystems for fish and wildlife and by recognizing that resource lands, such as farms and forests, provide economic, social and environmental benefits.

To help achieve these goals, this King County Comprehensive Plan 2000 Update:

- Includes strategies to address the problems of growth;
- Renews emphasis on environmental protection in light of listings of chinook salmon and bull trout as threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act;
- Calls for the County to continue to work with its citizens and other jurisdictions to tackle issues and develop solutions consistent with community values; and
- Brings together the elements needed to guide growth and development in unincorporated King County toward the goal of a thriving, healthy and environmentally sound county.

The general policies in this section call on King County to strive to provide a high quality of life, actively solicit citizen participation, and use its planning processes to strengthen communities.

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| RP-101 | King County shall strive to provide a high quality of life for its residents by working with cities, special purpose districts and residents to develop attractive, safe and accessible urban communities, retain rural character and rural neighborhoods, support economic development, maintain resource lands and preserve the natural environment. |
| RP-102 | King County shall actively solicit citizen participation from individuals and organized groups, including Unincorporated Area Councils, in the development and implementation of its plans. |
| RP-103 | King County shall seek comment during its planning processes from federally-recognized tribes. |
| RP-104 | King County's planning should strengthen communities by addressing all the issues, resources and needs that make a community whole, including land use, transit, health, human services, natural environment and the provision of infrastructure and other services. |
| RP-105 | King County shall integrate responses to the listings under the Endangered Species Act into future planning and economic development efforts and resource management programs to achieve a balance between environmental, social, and economic goals and objectives. |
| RP-106 | The Urban Growth Area line is considered long-term and can only be amended consistent with Countywide Planning Policy FW-1, and Comprehensive Plan Policy U-205. |
| RP-107 | The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map is adopted as part of this plan. It depicts the Urban Growth Area, rural area, natural resource lands and other land uses. The Land Use Map at the end of this chapter generally represents the official Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. |

II. Planning Framework

There is a hierarchy of planning in the County with consistency between the levels. Some issues, such as the establishment of the UGA, are best decided at the countywide level. While others, such as the amount of commercial space needed in a neighborhood, are best determined at the subarea plan level. The County will move over time to become both a regional and a rural government, without responsibility for land use planning on a local level within the UGA. This transition will be gradual, depending on the desires of local communities and the ability of cities to provide services to newly annexed areas.

RP-201 King County's planning should include multi-county, countywide, subarea and neighborhood levels of planning. Working with citizens, special purpose districts and cities as planning partners, the County shall strive to balance the differing needs identified across or within plans at these geographic levels.

A. Multi-County Planning

The Growth Management Act states that multi-county planning must be done for the four county region encompassing King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap Counties. This requirement was fulfilled by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) through the creation of the Multi-County Planning Policies. Multi-county planning will continue to be conducted under the auspices of the Puget Sound Regional Council with participation by the four counties. Other examples of multi-county planning include the Regional Transportation Plan, Regional Benchmarks and a Multi-County Economic Development Strategy.

B. Countywide Planning

Countywide planning is conducted by King County in cooperation with the cities to address a wide range of issues that affect the entire County. State law requires that planning be coordinated on a countywide level, and that the County itself adopt a Comprehensive Plan to regulate those areas it has direct responsibility for. The Countywide Planning Policies, adopted by the Metropolitan King County Council and ratified by the cities within the County in 1992, then revised in 1994, were written to meet the State requirements for countywide planning. The 1994 Comprehensive Plan is also written to meet State requirements. Functional plans are another example of countywide planning.

The Countywide Planning Policies describe an overall vision for the cities and unincorporated portions of King County, and provide general strategies and approaches to be used by local jurisdictions, acting individually and cooperatively, to achieve that vision. The Countywide Planning Policies were developed by a formal body, the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) which consists of elected officials from Seattle, the suburban cities and King County with ex-officio members from the special purpose districts and the Port of Seattle. The GMPC meets regularly to review issues of countywide significance and propose amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies.

King County, the City of Seattle and the suburban cities are responsible for ensuring that their respective comprehensive plans are consistent with and implement the Countywide Planning Policies. As the regional government, King County provides leadership on issues of countywide importance. The County should continue to emphasize implementation of the Countywide Planning Policies when engaged in planning and negotiating activities with cities and other service providers. Examples of such opportunities include Potential Annexation Area, service, and other Interlocal Agreements.

The King County Comprehensive Plan provides policy guidance for unincorporated King County. The Comprehensive Plan addresses all of the mandatory and several of the optional elements of the State Growth Management Act. The Plan serves as a vital guide to the future and provides a framework for managing change.

RP-202 **King County shall implement the Countywide Planning Policies through its Comprehensive Plan and through Potential Annexation Area, service and other interlocal agreements with the cities.**

C. Subarea Planning

Subarea planning, previously called community planning and basin planning, focuses the policy direction of the Comprehensive Plan to a smaller geographic area. Examples include the Fall City Subarea Plan, and planning efforts within a watershed or basin. Development of subarea plans are guided by the following policy as well as other applicable policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

RP-203 **Subarea plans provide detailed land use plans for local geographic areas. Subarea plans implement and shall be elements of the King County Comprehensive Plan and shall be consistent with the Plan's policies, development regulations and Land Use Map. The subarea plans should be consistent with functional plans' facility and service standards. The subarea plans may include, but are not limited to:**

- a. Identification of policies in the Comprehensive Plan that apply to the subarea;**
- b. Review and update of applicable community plan policies;**
- c. Specific land uses and implementing zoning, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan;**
- d. Identification of the boundaries of Unincorporated Activity Centers and Rural Towns;**
- e. Recommendations for the establishment of new Unincorporated Activity Centers, Community and Neighborhood Business Centers, if appropriate;**
- f. Recommendations for additional Open Space designations and park sites;**
- g. Recommendations for capital improvements, the means and schedule for providing them and amendments to functional plans to support planned land uses and implement Community Action Strategies;**
- h. Resolution of land use and service issues in Potential Annexation Areas;**
- i. Identification of new issues that need resolution at a countywide level; and,**
- j. Identification of all necessary implementing measures needed to carry out the plan.**

D. Functional Planning

Functional plans are detailed plans for facilities and services and also include action plans and programs for other governmental activities. Some functional plans are operational or programmatic and guide daily management decisions. Others include specific details of facility design and location. Plans that guide specific siting of facilities must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Functional plans are prepared by King County, independent special purpose districts or other public and private agencies. The Regional Wastewater Services Plan, which plans for conveyance, treatment and disposal of sewage, is an example of a functional plan. The Six-Year Transit Development Plan which guides transit service throughout King County is another example of a functional plan.

Capital improvements are important components of function plans. Capital facilities and spending on improvements and new facilities are closely linked to availability of funds. Function plans must identify costs and services of needed facilities and distinguish between improvements needed for new growth verses those needed to support existing public health and welfare needs.

- RP-204** Functional plans for facilities and services should:
- a. Be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and subarea and neighborhood plans;
 - b. Be consistent with the Community Action Strategies;
 - c. Define required service levels for the Urban Growth Area, Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands;
 - d. Provide standards for location, design and operation of public facilities and services;
 - e. Specify adequate, stable and equitable methods of paying for public facilities and services;
 - f. Be the basis for scheduling needed facilities and services through capital improvement programs; and
 - g. Plan for maintenance of existing facilities.
- RP-205** Existing functional plans which have not been adopted as part of this Comprehensive Plan shall remain in effect and continue as official county policy until reviewed and revised to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, or until repealed or replaced. In case of conflict or inconsistency between applicable policies in existing community and functional plans and the Comprehensive Plan, the Comprehensive Plan shall govern.
- RP-206** King County shall prepare functional plans to identify countywide facility and service needs and define ways to fund these consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan. Independent special purpose districts and other public agencies also prepare functional plans which should be considered by King County.

E. Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood planning is intended to address issues of concerns to individual communities. They will frequently address highly detailed planning issues, such as overlay district conditions, local improvement districts or business improvement areas. Examples of neighborhood planning include the White Center Action Plan, Westhill Plan, the Preston Village Plan and the Vashon Town Plan. Development of neighborhood plans is guided by the following policy and other applicable policies of this Comprehensive Plan. Reference to subarea plans at other places in this document could be considered to be subarea plans or neighborhood plans.

- RP-207** Neighborhood plans should provide detailed land use, infrastructure, and development plans for neighborhoods which are generally less than two square miles in size. These plans shall be elements of and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. These plans should also be consistent with functional plans' facility and service standards. Neighborhood plans may include, but are not limited to:
- a. Identification of policies in the Comprehensive Plan and applicable Community Plan that apply to the neighborhood;
 - b. Specific land uses and implementing zoning, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan;
 - c. Identification of locations and conditions for special overlay districts;
 - d. Recommendations for additional Open Space designations and park sites;
 - e. Recommendations for capital improvements, the means and schedule for providing them and amendments to functional plans to support planned land uses;
 - f. Identification of new issues that need resolution at a countywide level; and,
 - g. Identification of all necessary implementing measures needed to carry out the Plan.

III. Comprehensive Plan Amendments

In the process of implementing the Comprehensive plan, there may be a need for amendments to address emerging land use and regulatory issues. The County has established the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process to enable individual citizens, businesses, community groups, cities, county departments and others to propose changes to existing comprehensive plan policies and development regulations. This process provides for continuous and systematic review of Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations in response to changing conditions and circumstances impacting growth and development throughout King County.

The Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process includes an Annual Cycle and a Four-Year Cycle. The Annual Cycle generally is limited to those amendments that propose technical changes. The Four-Year Cycle is designed to address amendments that propose substantive changes. This Amendment Process, based on a defined cycle, provides the measure of certainty and predictability necessary to allow for new land use initiatives to work. By allowing annual amendments, the process provides sufficient flexibility to account for technical adjustments or changed circumstances. The process requires early and continuous public involvement and necessitates meaningful public dialogue.

King County has established a Docket Process to facilitate public involvement and participation in the comprehensive plan amendment process in accordance with RCW 36.70A.470. Parties interested in proposing changes to existing comprehensive plan policies, development regulations, land use designations, zoning, or other components of the plan can obtain and complete a Docket Form outlining the proposed amendment. Docket Forms are available via the King County web site at <http://www.metrokc.gov/exec/orpp/compplan>.

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| RP-301 | The Amendment Process shall provide continuing review and evaluation of Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations. |
| RP-302 | Through the Amendment Process, King County Comprehensive Plan policies and supporting development regulations shall be subject to review, evaluation, and amendment according to an Annual Cycle and a Four-Year Cycle in accordance with subsections (1) and (2) of RCW 36.70A.130. |
| RP-303 | The Annual Cycle shall consider proposed amendments which do not require substantive changes to Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations, or which do not alter the Urban Growth Area (UGA) Boundary. If the proposed amendments are necessary for the protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species, than subarea plans and proposals for a 4 to 1 project can be considered as part of the Annual Cycle. |
| RP-304 | The Four-Year Cycle shall consider proposed amendments that could be considered in the Annual Cycle and also those outside the scope of the Annual Cycle, proposed amendments relating to substantive changes to Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations, and proposals to alter the Urban Growth Area Boundary in accordance with applicable provisions of Countywide Planning Policy FW-1. |
| RP-305 | In accordance with RCW 36.70A.140 and the State Environmental Policy Act, as applicable, King County shall ensure public participation in the amendment process for Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations. King County shall disseminate information regarding public involvement in the |

Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process, including, but not limited to, the following: description of procedures and schedules for proposing amendments to Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations; guidelines for participating in the Docket Process; public meetings to obtain comments from the public or other agencies; provision of public review documents; and dissemination of information relating to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process on the internet or through other methods.

The following policies guide the preparation of amendments and their review by King County.

- RP-306** **Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map are subject to the requirements listed in policies RP-307 and RP-308.**
- RP-307** **Proposed amendments each calendar year shall be considered by the Metropolitan King County Council concurrently so that the cumulative effect of the proposals can be determined. All proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments should include the following elements, any of which may be included in environmental review documents:**
- a. A detailed statement of what is proposed to be changed and why;**
 - b. A statement of anticipated impacts of the change, including the geographic area affected and issues presented;**
 - c. A demonstration of why existing Comprehensive Plan guidance should not continue in effect or why existing criteria no longer apply;**
 - d. A statement of how the amendment complies with the Growth Management Act's goals and specific requirements;**
 - e. A statement of how the amendment complies with the Countywide Planning Policies;**
 - f. A statement of how functional plans and capital improvement programs support the change; and**
 - g. Public review of the recommended change, necessary implementation (including area zoning if appropriate) and alternatives.**
- RP-308** **Proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan policies should be accompanied by any changes to development regulations, modifications to capital improvement programs, subarea, neighborhood, and functional plans required for implementation so that regulations will be consistent with the Plan.**

A financial analysis is critical to all subarea, functional and neighborhood plans in order to evaluate the resources required and the time frame necessary for full implementation. Plan alternatives and costs should be clearly understood and plans should be financially achievable.

- RP-309** **King County should identify the financial costs and public benefits of proposed subarea, functional and neighborhood plans prior to adoption to ensure that implementation can be appropriately prioritized.**

IV. Review and Evaluation

In accordance with the Growth Management Act (GMA), King County and its cities have developed a Review and Evaluation Program in order to collect and review information relating to a variety of critical land use planning issues. The purpose of the Review and Evaluation Program is to provide policy makers, business leaders, cities, other agencies, and the public with information to evaluate the progress made by jurisdictions on the implementation of the respective comprehensive plan and countywide planning policies.

The Review and Evaluation Program involves a combination of implementation, monitoring, and reporting of information relating to critical countywide measures and indicators. This information is furnished through annual publications such as The King County Annual Growth Report and The King County Benchmark Report. King County collects and reviews information relating to and including, but not limited to, the following:

- Urban Densities
- Remaining Land Capacity (Buildable Lands)
- Growth and Development Assumptions, Targets, and Objectives
- Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Development
- Transportation
- Affordable Housing
- Economic Development
- Environmental Quality

Working in cooperation with the Growth Management Planning Council and the cities, King County evaluates data collected countywide and publishes The King County Annual Growth Report and The King County Benchmark Report. In addition, on an on-going basis, King County prepares and transmits progress reports to The Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

Some of the objectives of the Review and Evaluation Program include:

- Determining whether a county and its cities are achieving urban densities within urban growth areas by comparing growth and development assumptions, targets, and objectives contained in the county-wide planning policies and the county and city comprehensive plans with actual growth and development in the county and cities;
- Determining whether there is sufficient suitable land to accommodate applicable county-wide population projections;
- Determining the actual density of housing constructed within the UGA since the adoption of, or since the most recent evaluation of the comprehensive plan;
- Determining the actual amount of land developed for commercial and industrial uses within the UGA since the adoption of, or since the most recent evaluation of the comprehensive plan;
- Reviewing commercial, industrial, and housing needs by type and density range to determine the amount of land needed for commercial, industrial, and housing for the remaining portion of the twenty-year planning period used in the most recently adopted comprehensive plan; and
- Adopting and implementing measures intended to promote consistency between estimates of available land capacity, measures of actual development by type, and goals and objectives of city and county comprehensive plan policies, development regulations, and county-wide planning policies. Such measures include, but are not limited to possible amendments to countywide planning policies as determined necessary by the county and the cities.

The first review and evaluation will be completed on or before September 1, 2002, and subsequent review and evaluations will be performed every five (5) years thereafter.

RP-401 King County shall, in conjunction with the cities in accordance with the Countywide Planning Policies, conduct a Review and Evaluation Program to determine whether it is achieving needed urban densities within the Urban Growth Area. If necessary, the evaluation should also identify measures, other than adjusting the UGA, that can be taken to comply with GMA.